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CIA Has Indeed Opened the Mail

On April 1 *The Star* ran a letter from a reader purporting to correct my earlier column about the government's recently disclosed "big brother" treatment of American citizens' mail. The letter itself was in error.

It said "Furgurson should be advised that a 'mail cover' as used by federal agencies is not a procedure used in the U.S.S.R. Letters are not opened in the U.S."

Unless officials of the Postal Service and the CIA have been lying to their own detriment, that is not so. William J. Cotter, chief postal inspector, told a House Judiciary subcommittee on March 21 that for 20 years the CIA had opened and copied Americans' correspondence with addressees in Russia and elsewhere. Present and former CIA officials and the subcommittee chairman made corroborative comments about Cotter's testimony.

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